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The Relationship between Organizational Health Perceptions and Work-Related Behaviors of Physical Education Teachers: An Investigation of Gender Differences

Olcay Kiremitci [1], R. Timuçin Gençer [2]

Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between organizational health perceptions and work-related behaviors of physical education teachers in terms of gender differences. A total of 221 physical education teachers (98 females and 123 males) working at primary and secondary education institutions in five towns of Izmir participated in this study. The Organizational Health Inventory (Akbaba, 1997), Work-Related Behaviors and Experience Pattern Scale (Gençer et al., 2010) and a questionnaire consisting of questions designed to obtain the demographic information of the physical education teachers were used in the study. Canonical correlation analysis is used to identify and measure the associations among two sets of variables. As a result of the canonical correlation analysis, sub-dimensions of organizational identity and satisfaction with life were prominent for the overall sample; environmental effectiveness and balance and mental stability for female physical education teachers; and environmental effectiveness and tendency to exert for male physical education teachers. It appeared that interaction and harmony inside and outside the school are important for both female and male physical education teachers. In addition, while it is important to maintain a balance between professional life and family life for female physical education teachers, for male physical education teachers it is important to make an effort to fulfill their work-related tasks ideally due to their responsibilities to their families.

Keywords

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Introduction

Education, which can be defined as a process that helps an individual to interpret the events and facts occurring in his/her social and physical environment and to approach them in a systematic and critical way (Tanrıöven, 2011), improves behaviors, skills, sources, and abilities of an individual and helps him or her lead a much better life (Mirowsky & Ross, 2003). Education has a critical place in providing a qualified workforce necessary for organizations to survive in the global competitive environment (Milner & Khoza, 2008). Today, as the social expectations gradually increase and vary,

[1] Ege University, School of Physical Education and Sports, Turkey, olcaykiremitci@gmail.com
[2] Ege University, School of Physical Education and Sports, Turkey, timucin.gencer@gmail.com

efforts also increase to improve schools as the institutions of planned education. Ensuring school efficiency and providing students with high-quality education can only be possible with a structuring that will help qualified individuals to desire to work as teachers (OECD, 2005).

Teachers' health and work-related behaviors are among the important problems in education (Gençer, Boyacıoğlu, Kiremitci, & Doğan, 2010). As teachers struggle more for success, their work-related stress increases as well. Although individuals differ in their responses at times of stress (Robbins, 2001), teachers who maintain their struggle for success for a long time face the risk of increased stress and disappointments with the effect of their expectations and their environments (Jepson & Forest, 2006). Vlăduţ and Kállay (2011) stated that teachers' time is too limited to show their real performances. All these reasons may affect teachers' job satisfaction adversely, decrease their efficiency, increase their discontinuity to work, and may cause them to leave the job. Instead of bureaucratic management strategies for controlling teachers, the tendency to create an appropriate work environment for the role of the teaching profession has become prominent for the education institutions to solve these problems (Conley & Muncey, 1999).

Generally, intensive pressure and continuous stress occurring due to work cause important individual losses and this also leads to serious problems for the institutions where these individuals work. The decrease in individual work performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment and the concerning increase in resigning behavior create critical problems for organizations that have to be overcome (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). In order to overcome these problems in education, there is an increasing need for healthy schools that provide teachers with the necessary opportunities to maintain their work efficiency and cope persistently amongst internal and external pressure conditions (Tsui & Cheng, 1999).

Studies in the field of organizational health are an extension of research relating to job-related stress. From this point of view, professional stress results from individual differences and work environments. Thus, organizational health is an integrated structure that examines the individual and organizational elements necessary for the efficient operation of an organization (Miller, Griffin, & Hart, 1999). Organizational health, in addition to the efficient operation of an organization, is a comprehensive concept concerning organization's ability to develop and grow (Lyden & Klingele, 2000). The structure of a school has a direct effect on principals, teachers, and students. The interaction of all these individuals with each other forms a social texture (Freiberg & Stein, 1999). Many researchers agree on the idea that quality perceptions of teachers concerning their work environments affect their professional commitment, increase their work performances, and this, in turn, increases the quality of education at schools (Tsui & Cheng, 1999).

An individual's emotional, intellectual, and behavioral characteristics have a significant impact on organizational health (Sabancı, 2009). Furthermore, poor organizational health is one of the most important reasons for the stress, burnout, and ineffective communication in organizations (Cemaloğlu, 2007). Physical education teachers are the leaders who stand out with their work in school organization (Arslan & Menteş, 2002). But due to the changes occurred in educational system, the profession of the physical education teaching has begun to be perceived as weightless. Worse still, physical education teachers' work-related behaviors might be affected negatively from this situation. The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between organizational health perceptions of physical education teachers and their work-related behaviors and to determine any possible gender-related differences.

Method

Participants

The study was carried out with the voluntary participation of randomly selected physical education teachers working at private (n=87) and state (n=134) primary and secondary schools in the districts of Narlıdere, Bornova, Konak, Güzelbahçe, and Karşıyaka in Izmir. A total of 221 physical education teachers (98 females and 123 males) participated in the study. The ages of the participating physical education teachers ranged between 25 and 60 (M = 41.95, Sd. = 8.03).

Data Collection Tool

Work-Related Behaviors and Experience Patterns Scale: The Work-Related Behaviors and Experience Pattern Scale was developed by Schaarschmidt and Fischer (1997) in order to analyze individual psycho-social behaviors and experiences. Both the original and the Turkish version of the scale consists of 66 items explaining work-related attitudes, experiences, and opinions and 11 sub-dimensions (each one consists of 6 items) aiming at evaluating work-related state of well-being; subjective significance of work (the place of work in private life); professional ambition (efforts towards professional success and promotion); tendency to exert (tendency to use all potential in order to fulfill professional tasks completely); striving for perfection (efforts for the good quality and completeness of individual working performance); emotional distancing (ability to psychological relaxation in work); resignation tendencies (tendency to give up easily occurring with failure); offensive coping with problems (active attitude towards potential and confronted problems); balance and mental stability (inner balance and psychological determination); satisfaction with work (satisfaction with the point reached at work); satisfaction with life (satisfaction in one's life in general as well as at work); and experience of social support (belief in the support of the people around the individual). The items on the scale are answered on a 5-point Likert Scale (from "I don't agree at all [1]" to "I totally agree [5]") (Schaarschmidt & Fischer, 1997; Schaarschmidt & Fischer, 2003). Confirmatory factor analysis results ($\chi 2$ /df= 2.19; RMSEA = 0.056 and SRMR= 0.073) and Cronbach's alpha coefficients (varied between .72 and .85) reveal that the measurement tool is valid and reliable (Gençer et al. 2010). Internal consistency coefficients of the sub-scales were between .70 and .83 in this study.

Organizational Health Inventory: The Organizational Health Inventory was developed by Akbaba (1997) in order to measure the perceptions of teachers about the organizational health of schools in Turkey. The Organizational health inventory consists of 53 items within five sub-scales: organizational leadership (includes setting the objectives, planning, using resources effectively, and controlling and developing a vision—13 items), organizational unity (includes protection against destructive effects, interaction among people, and integrating the needs of society and the organization—10 items), organizational identity (includes feeling integrated with the organization and atmosphere, which promotes staff and school morale—8 items), environmental effectiveness (includes effective internal and external interactions and integrating the needs of the society and the school—14 items), and organizational product (includes providing resources, promoting the quality of those resources, integrating situational factors with the resources, and generating a healthy product—8 items). Items were scored on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 4 (always). Among the 53 items on the scale, items 12, 19, 23, 33, 39, 40, 42, and 47 are in negative direction and are calculated after being reversed. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .96 (Akbaba, 1997; Altun, 2001). Internal consistency coefficient of the scale was .97 in this study.

Procedure

The questionnaires used in the study were given through face-to-face interviews. The questionnaire form consisted of Organizational Health Inventory, Work-Related Behaviors and Experience Patterns Scale, and questions designed to obtain demographical information of physical education teachers.

Analysis of Data

The data obtained from the questionnaires used in the study were analyzed on the SPSS 13.0 package program. A canonical correlation analysis was carried out in order to determine the relationships between organizational health and work-related behavior data sets. This was performed on the overall sample and for the female and male physical education teachers who participated in the study.

Results

In the mean values belonging to the sub-dimensions that form the organizational health perceptions and work-related behaviors of the physical education teachers, it was seen that the organizational leadership sub-dimension has the highest mean value in both the overall sample and the gender-based groups. The organizational unity sub-dimension had the lowest mean values in all groups. In the sub-dimensions of work-related behavior, the satisfaction with the work sub-dimension had the highest means in the overall sample and in the group of female physical education teachers, whereas in the group comprising male physical education teachers, the highest means belonged to the balance and mental stability sub-dimension and the resignation tendencies sub-dimension had the lowest mean values in all groups (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Health and Work-Related Behavior and Experience Patterns Subscales

	Total group (n = 220)		Female (n= 98)		Male (n=122)	
	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.
Organizational Health						
Organizational leadership	3.26	.65	3.34	.62	3.22	.67
Organizational unity	2.95	.62	2.99	.59	2.94	.65
Organizational identity	3.22	.57	3.29	.51	3.16	.62
Environmental effectiveness	3.07	.54	3.11	.45	3.04	.60
Organizational product	3.15	.63	3.23	.54	3.08	.68
Work-Related Behavior						
Subjective significance of work	3.27	.59	3.32	.58	3.23	.57
Professional ambition	3.32	.68	3.25	.77	3.39	.61
Tendency to exert	3.28	.65	3.26	.66	3.31	.63
Striving for perfection	3.85	.63	3.90	.53	3.83	.68
Emotional distancing	3.01	.57	3.07	.53	2.94	.59
Resignation tendencies	2.24	.65	2.27	.68	2.26	.64
Offensive coping with problems	3.69	.65	3.76	.64	3.66	.65
Balance and mental stability	3.81	.60	3.69	.63	3.88	.56
Satisfaction with work	3.92	.63	4.02	.56	3.84	.66
Satisfaction with life	3.77	.60	3.91	.59	3.64	.58
Experience of social support	3.61	.61	3.74	.69	3.52	.52

Table 2. Results for the Canonical Correlation Analysis

		Wilk's lambda	Chi-SQ	df	p	Canonical Correlations	Canonical R^2
Total Group	U1-V1	.478	156.336	55.000	.000	.538	.29
	U2-V2	.672	83.979	40.000	.000	.425	.18
	U3-V3	.820	41.938	27.000	.033	.312	.10
	U4-V4	.908	20.342	16.000	.205	.239	.06
	U5-V5	.963	7.887	7.000	.343	.191	.04
Female	U1-V1	.177	153.040	55.000	.000	.679	.46
	U2-V2	.329	98.387	40.000	.000	.573	.33
	U3-V3	.490	63.200	27.000	.000	.533	.28
	U4-V4	.684	33.633	16.000	.006	.487	.24
	U5-V5	.896	9.709	7.000	.206	.322	.10
Male	U1-V1	.390	106.802	55.000	.000	.586	.34
	U2-V2	.594	59.031	40.000	.027	.471	.22
	U3-V3	.763	30.630	27.000	.287	.384	.15
	U4-V4	.896	12.515	16.000	.708	.258	.07
	U5-V5	.959	4.714	7.000	.695	.202	.04

In the canonical correlation analysis that was done for the overall sample and for the groups of male and female physical teachers participating in the study separately, five different canonical coefficients were calculated for each group in order to determine the relationships between organizational health- and work-related behavior data sets. Regardless of the gender variable, the results of the canonical correlation analysis applied to the data set obtained from all physical education teachers (n=221) who participated in the study, show that the first three canonical functions belonging to the canonical pairs formed were statistically significant ($p<.05$; $p<.01$). As a result of the canonical correlation analysis applied to the data of female physical education teachers (n=98), the first four canonical functions were found to be significant ($p<.01$). In the group of male physical education teachers (n=123), on the other hand, only two statistically significant functions were found ($p<.05$; $p<.01$) (Table 2).

In the interpretation of the results obtained from the canonical correlation analysis, canonical weight, canonical loading, canonical cross loading, explained variance ratio, and redundancy index were taken into consideration (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). Considering dependent and independent data sets' rates of explaining their own canonical variable set (Shared Variance), and the other canonical variable set (Redundancy), it was seen that among the functions determined to be significant, the first functions have a higher percentage of expression than the other significant functions (Table 3).

Table 3. Redundancy Analysis for Meaningful Canonical Functions of Dependent and Independent Variables

Standardized Variance of the Dependent Variables Explained by (Organizational Health)					
	Canonical Function	Their Own Canonical Variate (Shared Variance)		The Opposite Canonical Variate (Redundancy)	
		Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Total Group	Function 1**	.556	.556	.161	.161
	Function 2**	.157	.713	.028	.189
	Function 3*	.037	.750	.004	.193
Female	Function 1**	.572	.572	.263	.263
	Function 2**	.099	.671	.032	.295
	Function 3**	.064	.735	.018	.313
	Function 4**	.089	.824	.021	.334
Male	Function 1**	.383	.383	.132	.132
	Function 2*	.053	.436	.012	.114
Standardized Variance of the Independent Variables Explained by (Work-Related Behavior)					
	Canonical Function	Their Own Canonical Variate (Shared Variance)		The Opposite Canonical Variate (Redundancy)	
		Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Total Group	Function 1**	.149	.149	.043	.043
	Function 2**	.085	.234	.015	.058
	Function 3*	.095	.330	.009	.067
Female	Function 1**	.210	.210	.097	.097
	Function 2**	.106	.316	.035	.132
	Function 3**	.070	.386	.020	.152
	Function 4**	.094	.480	.022	.174
Male	Function 1**	.146	.146	.032	.032
	Function 2*	.078	.224	.027	.059

**p<.01, *p<.05

Among the canonical functions that were found to be statistically significant, canonical and cross loadings of those having the highest rates of shared variance and redundancy were examined. In the first significant function obtained from the overall sample, the organizational identity sub-dimension was prominent for the organizational health data set (canonical loading=-.877, cross loading=-.472); and the satisfaction with life sub-dimension was prominent for the work-related behavior data set (canonical loading=-.605, cross loading=-325). In the first significant function obtained from the female physical education teachers, the environmental effectiveness sub-dimension was prominent for the organizational health data set (canonical loading=.939, cross loading=.637), and the balance and mental stability sub-dimension was prominent for the work-related behavior data set (canonical loading=.780,cross loading=.529) (Table 4).

Table 4. Canonical and Cross-Loadings for the Meaningful Canonical Functions of Dependent and Independent Variable

Total Group (**p<.01; *p<.05)	Function 1**		Function 2**		Function 3*	
	Canonical	Cross	Canonical	Cross	Canonical	Cross
Organizational Health						
Organizational leadership	-.681	-.367	-.308	-.131	.323	.101
Organizational unity	-.514	-.277	-.336	-.143	-.177	-.055
Organizational identity	-.877	-.472	-.287	-.122	.111	.035
Environmental effectiveness	-.862	-.464	-.265	-.113	-.169	-.053
Organizational product	-.734	-.395	-.651	-.277	.086	.027
Work-Related Behavior						
Subjective significance of work	-.235	-.127	.325	.138	.388	.121
Professional ambition	-.267	-.144	-.051	-.022	.210	.065
Tendency to exert	.130	.070	-.051	-.022	.295	.092
Striving for perfection	-.412	-.221	.070	.030	.404	.126
Emotional distancing	.253	.136	-.290	-.123	-.012	-.004
Resignation tendencies	.315	.170	-.385	-.163	.586	.182
Offensive coping with problems	-.402	-.216	-.155	-.066	.204	.063
Balance and mental stability	-.591	-.318	-.159	-.067	-.328	-.102
Satisfaction with work	-.332	-.179	-.465	-.197	-.257	-.080
Satisfaction with life	-.605	-.325	-.499	-.212	-.052	-.016
Experience of social support	-.424	-.228	-.267	-.113	-.204	-.063

Female Group (**p<.01)	Function 1**		Function 2**		Function 3**		Function 4**	
	Canonical	Cross	Canonical	Cross	Canonical	Cross	Canonical	Cross
Organizational Health								
Organizational leadership	.571	.387	-.541	-.310	-.120	-.064	-.135	-.066
Organizational unity	.646	.439	.071	.041	-.313	-.167	.095	.046
Organizational identity	.807	.548	-.090	-.052	-.036	-.019	-.561	-.273
Environmental effectiveness	.939	.637	-.250	-.143	-.120	-.064	.102	.050
Organizational product	.763	.518	-.355	-.203	-.438	-.234	-.301	-.147
Work-Related Behavior								
Subjective significance of work	-.179	-.122	-.283	-.162	.298	.159	-.376	-.183
Professional ambition	.130	.088	-.429	-.246	.068	.036	-.014	-.007
Tendency to exert	-.254	-.172	-.440	-.252	.165	.088	-.082	-.040
Striving for perfection	.133	.091	-.458	-.262	.527	.281	-.093	-.045
Emotional distancing	.036	.024	.168	.096	.005	.003	-.168	-.082
Resignation tendencies	-.574	-.390	-.589	-.337	-.469	-.250	.137	.067
Offensive coping with problems	.139	.095	-.059	-.034	.187	.100	-.465	-.226
Balance and mental stability	.780	.529	-.014	-.008	.098	.052	-.077	-.038
Satisfaction with work	.539	.366	.310	.177	-.116	-.062	-.383	-.186
Satisfaction with life	.627	.425	.033	.019	-.293	-.156	-.649	-.316
Experience of social support	.733	.497	.150	.086	-.078	-.042	-.200	-.097

Male Group (**p<.01; *p<.05)	Function 1**		Function 2*	
	Canonical	Cross	Canonical	Cross
Organizational Health				
Organizational leadership	-.650	-.381	.003	.002
Organizational unity	-.421	-.247	.030	.014
Organizational identity	-.680	-.399	-.465	-.219
Environmental effectiveness	-.762	-.447	.018	.008
Organizational product	-.520	-.305	-.220	-.104
Work-Related Behavior				
Subjective significance of work	-.255	-.120	-.323	-.189
Professional ambition	-.377	-.177	-.182	-.107
Tendency to exert	-.674	-.317	.353	.207
Striving for perfection	-.596	-.280	-.205	-.120
Emotional distancing	.311	.146	.418	.245
Resignation tendencies	-.480	-.226	.246	.144
Offensive coping with problems	-.420	-.198	-.254	-.149
Balance and mental stability	-.183	-.086	-.341	-.200
Satisfaction with work	-.033	-.016	-.058	-.034
Satisfaction with life	-.086	-.040	-.331	-.194
Experience of social support	.209	.098	-.152	-.089

On the other hand, in the first significant function obtained from the male physical education teachers sample, the environmental effectiveness sub-dimension was prominent for the organizational health data set (canonical loading=-.762, cross loading=-.447), while the tendency to exert sub-dimension had higher values than the other sub-dimensions for the work-related behavior data set stability (canonical loading=-.674, cross loading=-.317) (Table 4).

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between organizational health perceptions and work-related behaviors of physical education teachers. Analysis of teachers' perceptions regarding school health is important in determining the factors affecting teachers' efficiency, motivation, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction negatively, as well as for the efforts at improving the school (Pretorius & De Villiers, 2009). In addition, teachers' perceptions regarding school health reflect the quality of their professional life (Tsui & Cheng, 1999). That the organizational leadership sub-dimension is prominent among physical education teachers' organizational health perceptions may be due to the fact that physical education teachers take an active role in planning and implementing intra- and inter-school sports activities. Moreover, physical education teachers coordinate the efficient use of physical conditions of the school and the available sports equipment. Furthermore, they create teams according to the students' levels of ability based on their development and technical and tactical coordination of these teams can be considered as activities that improve leadership characteristics of physical education teachers.

Individuals vary in terms of their distinctive values, characteristics, needs, and personalities that they bring into the work environment (Doherty, 1998). That the organizational unity sub-dimension had the lowest value among the organizational health perceptions of physical education teachers may be due to the differences between physical education teachers and other branch teachers. In addition, the fact that physical education lessons are not seen academically important by school managers, other branch teachers and parents of students may be another reason for this. As physical education courses are at the lowest level in the hierarchy of school courses (Fejgin, Ephraty, & Ben-Sira, 1995; Smith & Leng, 2003), the creation of a suitable ground for cooperation between physical education teachers and other branch teachers may be hindered. Vos, Van Der Westhuizen, Mentz, & Ellis (2012) state that in order for the school to reach its general objectives, teachers' active participation in school activities and their cooperation is needed.

That physical education teachers had the highest values in the satisfaction with the work sub-dimension among work-related behavior sub-dimensions may be due to the fact that they do not come across expectations and demands for their students' academic development. Also, in comparison with other branch teachers, physical education teachers work actively in a much more comfortable environment. This keeps physical education teachers away from emotional burnout. Hence, the resignation tendencies sub-dimension was at very low levels among physical education teachers.

The fact that female physical education teachers had high values in the satisfaction with work sub-dimension supports the findings of previous studies carried out with present and prospective teachers in Turkey (Dilmaç & Bozgeyikli, 2009; Yılmaz & Şahin, 2009). The fact that teaching is usually considered a more suitable job for women and that female prospective teachers respect this profession more than males in Turkey (Çapa & Çil, 2000; Özbek, Kahyaoğlu, & Özgen, 2007) may be the factors explaining the reason for the high levels in job satisfaction of female teachers. On the other hand, in the group of male physical education teachers, the balance and mental stability sub-dimension has the highest mean. This may be because of the social roles attributed to males in Turkey. In Turkish community, males have to maintain their inner balance and sustain psychological determination in order to deal with difficulties in fulfilling their responsibilities especially for their families.

At the end of the canonical correlation analysis applied on the data obtained from the overall sample in order to determine the relationship between data sets, the first function with the highest percentage of explanation was taken into consideration. In this function, the variables of satisfaction with life and organizational identity with the highest canonical loadings were prominent. Job satisfaction, which is generally defined as the whole of the emotional reactions of individuals towards their jobs, is a concept relating life satisfaction due to its effects on the physical and mental health of an individual (Sevimli & İşcan, 2005). Membership of an individual to an organization is a part of his/her identity (De Moura, Abrams, Retter, Gunnarsdottir, & Ando, 2009). Working in a quality or superior school than the others may contribute positively in terms of life satisfaction for physical education teachers.

As a result of the analysis of the relationship between work-related behavior and perception of organizational health in terms of gender, the sub-dimensions of environmental effectiveness and balance and mental stability are prominent in the significant first function obtained from the sample of female physical education teachers. In order for female physical education teachers to maintain their professional careers, it is important that an environment of efficient communication and harmony that is away from conflicts inside and outside the school is established. In addition, in accordance with the role of women in society, it is necessary that a balance is maintained between work and family life in order for them to sustain their professional career.

As for the significant first function obtained from the male physical education teachers, the sub-dimensions of environmental effectiveness and tendency to exert appear to be prominent. Like female physical education teachers, male physical education teachers attach importance to an environmental interaction that provides an environment of efficient communication and harmony that is free of conflicts. This makes male physical education teachers put great effort into fulfill their tasks ideally because of their familial responsibilities.

Although teachers who are satisfied in their professional careers are thought to be individuals who are committed to their jobs, the level of a strong commitment to the profession may not be sufficient alone for satisfaction at work (Kieschke & Schaarschmidt, 2008). Problems facing a teacher at the school he/she works affect him/her and the school negatively, and they may have adverse effects on the students of these teachers. Therefore, it is important to establish a healthy structure at the schools where teachers work. The success of this structure will increase teachers' performance and thus will contribute to obtaining the desired outcomes from educational processes.

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